

LISTING OF CLAIMS

CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 (cancelled).

Claims 11-12 (previously cancelled).

Claims 13-14 (cancelled).

15. (New) An apparatus for loading material into a storage area of a vehicle sized to transport material, said vehicle having a chassis that includes said storage area, said chassis being supported by at least a pair of opposite wheel structures for movement on a support surface, each of said wheel structures having a rim with a tire mounted thereto, said storage area having a portion with a bottom positioned at a height above said support surface and at about the top of said rims, said portion having a lower edge, said apparatus comprising:

a chute having a slide surface with a top edge positioned proximate the lower edge of said portion, said slide surface extending away from said lower edge downwardly toward a bottom edge of said chute spaced from said support surface and below the top edge of said chute;

a generally planar receiving member having a front edge attached to said bottom edge of said chute and a rear edge spaced from said front edge a distance to define a loading area, configured to retain material thereon;

a connector arrangement for pivotally connecting said chute to a rear support member of said vehicle proximate said lower edge; and

operation means for moving said apparatus between a deployed position in which said apparatus extends away from said bottom with said loading area disposed below said lower edge of said portion and above said support surface and a transfer position in which said loading area is raised sufficient to transfer material placed on the loading area toward said chute and toward said bottom.

16. (New). The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising at least two side walls connected to and extending upward from said receiving member and configured to retain material in said loading area and to guide material deposited on said loading area towards said chute when said apparatus is moved from said deployed position to said transfer position.

17. (New) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said side walls have a height above said receiving member of no greater than about 6 inches

18. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a retaining wall connected to and extending upward from said rear edge of the receiving member, and configured to retain material on said loading area.

19. (New) The apparatus of claim 18, wherein said retaining wall has a height above said receiving member of no greater than about 6 inches.

20. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising at least two side walls connected to and extending upwardly from said chute and said side walls connected to said chute are configured to guide material from said loading area towards said storage area, when said apparatus is in said transfer position.

21. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said loading area is a planar platform disposed essentially horizontally above said support surface when the apparatus is in said deployed position.

22. (New) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein said receiving member makes no contact with said support surface.

23. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said receiving member and said chute are joined at an angle of greater than 90 degrees and less than 180 degrees.

24. (New) For use with a vehicle having a storage area for transporting material, said vehicle including at least a pair of opposite wheel structures for movement on a support surface, each of said wheel structures having a rim with a tire mounted thereto, said storage area having a portion with a bottom positioned at a height above said support surface and at about the top of said rims, said portion having a lower edge, and an apparatus for loading material into said storage area comprising:

a chute having a slide surface with a top edge positioned proximate the lower edge of said portion, said slide surface extending away from said lower edge downwardly toward a bottom edge of said chute spaced from said support surface and below the top edge of said chute;

a generally planar receiving member having a front edge attached to said bottom edge of said chute and a rear edge spaced from said front edge a distance to define a loading area, configured to retain material thereon;

a connector arrangement for pivotally connecting said chute to the rear support member of said vehicle proximate said lower edge; and

operation means for moving said apparatus between a deployed position in which said apparatus extends away from said bottom with said loading area disposed below said lower edge of said portion and above said support surface and a transfer position in which said loading area is raised sufficient to transfer material placed on the loading area toward said chute and toward said bottom.

25. (New). The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising at least two side walls connected to and extending upward from said receiving member and configured to retain material in said loading area and guide material deposited on said loading area towards said chute when said apparatus is moved from said deployed position to said transfer position.

26. (New) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein said side walls have a height above said receiving member of no greater than about 6 inches

27. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising a retaining wall connected to and extending upward from said rear edge of the receiving member, and configured to retain material on said loading area.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein said retaining wall has a height above said receiving member of no greater than about 6 inches.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising at least two side walls connected to and extending upwardly from said chute and said side walls connected

to said chute are configured to guide material from said loading area towards said storage area, when said apparatus is in said transfer position.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein said loading area is a planar platform disposed essentially horizontally above said support surface when the apparatus is in said deployed position.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said receiving member makes no contact with said support surface.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein said receiving member and said chute are joined at an angle of greater than 90 degrees and less than 180 degrees.

33. (New) The combination of a vehicle and a loading apparatus, said vehicle having a storage area for transporting material, said vehicle including at least a pair of opposite wheel structures for movement on a support surface, each of said wheel structures having a rim with a tire mounted thereto, said storage area having a portion with a bottom positioned at a height above said support surface and at about the top of said rims, said portion having a lower edge; and said loading apparatus being configured for loading material into said storage area, said apparatus comprising:

a chute having a slide surface with a top edge positioned proximate the lower edge of said portion, said slide surface extending away from said lower edge downwardly toward a bottom edge of said chute spaced from said support surface and below the top edge of said chute;

a generally planar receiving member having a front edge attached to said bottom edge of said chute and a rear edge spaced from said front edge a distance to define a loading area, configured to retain material thereon,

a connector arrangement for pivotally connecting said chute to a rear support member of said vehicle proximate said lower edge, and

operation means for moving said loading apparatus between a deployed position in which said apparatus extends away from said bottom with said loading area disposed below said lower edge of said portion and above said support surface and a transfer position in which said loading area is raised sufficient to transfer material placed on the loading area toward said chute and toward said bottom.

34. (New) The apparatus of claim 33, further comprising at least two side walls connected to and extending upward from said receiving member and configured to retain material deposited on said loading area and to guide material deposited on said loading area towards said chute when said apparatus is moved from said deployed position to said transfer position.

35. (New) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein said side walls have a height above said receiving member of no greater than about 6 inches.

36. (New) The apparatus of claim 33, further comprising a retaining wall connected to and extending upward from said rear edge of the receiving member, and configured to retain material on said loading area.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 36, wherein said retaining wall has a height above said receiving member of no greater than about 6 inches.

38. (New) The apparatus of claim 33, further comprising at least two side walls connected to and extending upwardly from said chute and said side walls connected to said chute are configured to guide material from said loading area towards said storage area, when said apparatus is in said transfer position.

39. (New) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein said loading area is a planar platform disposed essentially horizontally above said support surface when the apparatus is in said deployed position.

40. (New) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein said receiving member makes no contact with said support surface.

41. (New) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein said receiving member and said chute are joined at an angle of greater than 90 degrees and less than 180 degrees.

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